

the complacent entry in the Mutilated Diary a year later. The incident had at least made him notorious, and notoriety to Disraeli was at this time as the breath of his nostrils. Some observers may have thought the taste of his letters questionable. D'Orsay declared that they were perfection and added that everybody agreed with him ; and one of Disraeli's supporters at Wycombe was so impressed by their eloquence that 'neither he nor his old father could sleep all the night' after their perusal. ' Scarcely a day has elapsed,' Disraeli wrote <sup>1</sup> a month later, 'on which I have not received letters from some part of the United Kingdom congratulating me on my conduct.'

The charge of ingratitude, skilfully exploited by his adversaries, is what did him most injury, both then and afterwards; and it is worth while repeating his own defence :

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Whatever may be Mr. O'Connell's errors, he has an instinctive horror of blockheads. The man who talks or writes of my *ingratitude* to Mr. O'Connell only perverts our language and makes himself ridiculous. Mr. O'Connell, not at my written request, as he has been falsely represented to have stated, but at the verbal request of a third person, wrote a commonplace letter to the electors of Wycombe in my favour *when opposed to Colonel Grey, the son of the Wliig Prime Minister*. The letter did me no good, but the reverse, but it was one of those slight courtesies of life, whatever might be its motives, of which a gentleman would always be prepared to show his sense by courtesies as slight. When therefore, long after, I for the first and only time met Mr. O'Connell, *who, in the meantime, had become a Repealer*, I thanked him for his courtesy, and however we differed in politics, I seized with pleasure that opportunity of being civil to him; and very recently when I met his most intimate friend, Mr. Ronayne.<sup>2</sup> . . . I wished to show by the tone of my conversation that, however I was opposed to him.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the electors of Taunton, June 13, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* dated May 3, 1835, this gentleman declared that Disraeli 'had within the last month spoken to him in terms of the most extravagant admiration of O'Connell,' to whom also he had asked him 'to communicate his kind remembrances.'

